McFarland blames generally `the influences which make our society what it is', and specifically the `instructor of youth', especially the religious teacher. Such teachers tend to repress young minds, certain `elemental parts' of which require expression, which must be allowed or `exuberant nature revolts' (16). Behind the repressive teacher is an even more repressive `goddess' of Public Opinion, who caps these volcanic forces of natural expression so that `secret vices gnaw and gender in the hidden recesses of the soul' (16).

From this the `moral pestilence' appears to be less masturbation itself than the guilt associated with it. But masturbation is not counted among the natural forms of expression. These are apparently non-sexual activities; precisely how they siphon off sexual energies is never clarified. But the `puritanism' which McFarland opposes is, curiously enough, less a matter of sex than of decorum. McFarland suggests that `mirth and sports' should be taken more seriously, as measures for preventing the `thronging' of American institutions with insane masturbators, etc. It is as if, when the most obvious source of repression proved to be sexual, the doctors chose exercise.

In the annual report for 1859 Workman admits that a superficial glance at the statistics would indicate that men are more liable to insanity than women, and that marriage produces insanity in the latter, but he warns against coming to any such conclusions. There is a correlation between marriage and insanity for women, because insanity seems to target women between age 25 and 35, by which time most women are already married. However, there is a telling lack of any such caution with regard to statistics indicating a correlation between single men and insanity:

> The Asylums of this continent abound with the wretched victims of this apparently concomitant curse of advancing civilization, -- a curse which medical alienists regard, not as the result of ignorance, but as one of the products of that which is called improved modern education. (1859, 7)

Obviously, agreeing with the Dr McFarland quoted in the above report, he attributes masturbation, not to its more obvious cause, sexual repression, but to a more narrowly defined physical kind -- simple inadequate exercise: